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RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3821
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// C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - SUBJECT LINE //

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017
TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: FISCALIAS PREPARES TO RESUME SALVATORE MANCUSO'S
CONFESSION

REF: A. A. BOGOTA 11330
[B. B. BOGOTA 11301](#)

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) The Prosecutor General's (Fiscalia) Justice and Peace Unit Chief Luis Gonzalez told us on January 12 his office is preparing the second round of questions for ex-paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso once his "version libre" or voluntary confession resumes on January 15. Gonzalez said the ongoing confessions of four mid-level ex-paramilitary leaders provided a "goldmine of information." Gonzalez said the JPL unit needs more resources. He had received a commitment from Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran to provide additional resources after threatening to resign. We have already provided USD 1.5 million in assistance to the Unit and will make available additional assistance once we receive authorized FY06 funding for Justice and Peace, including FY06 supplemental funds. End summary.

Gearing-Up for Mancuso's Version Libre

[¶2.](#) (C) Salvatore Mancuso was the first top paramilitary leader to begin his "version libre" or voluntary confession under the Justice and Peace Law (JPL) process. In his December 19 testimony in Medellin, Mancuso focused on how FARC hostility and lack of State presence led to the "need to create paramilitary groups." The emotional testimony, in which Mancuso cried and apologized to the victims for "all the tears" he caused, lasted only two days before being suspended after he asked for additional time to prepare. His version libre is scheduled to resume on January 15.

[¶3.](#) (C) JPL unit head Luis Gonzalez told us on January 12 his office is using the recess to prepare precise questions to ask Mancuso. With our help, the JPL Unit has developed a

question guide for prosecutors that will be used in future version libres. This question guide is divided into three phases:

- Introductory Phase: Explain the JPL process and obligations; get all the necessary biographical information on the individual, including aliases; his/her financial situation (legal and illegal assets); the history of his/her involvement in the organization; and the history on the organization and its finances.
- Revelation of Criminal Activity Phase: The ex-paramilitary would have to advise the Fiscalía of the crimes which he/she plans to confess to allow the Fiscalía to properly inform the victims and arrange for their participation in the process. He/she also would need to confess his/her knowledge of the organization's involvement in crimes.
- Verification of Information Phase: The prosecutor's would have to verify all the information stated by the former paramilitary and should ask further questions/clarifications.

¶4. (C) Gonzalez said Mancuso must answer more questions on his involvement in the organization and its history and finances prior to beginning the second phase of this process.

Gonzalez is optimistic Mancuso will be forthcoming despite the fact that some ex-paramilitary leaders are using intimidation to silence paras inclined to cooperate with the Fiscalía and reveal ties between the AUC and politicians, public forces, cattle ranchers, and others. He said Carlos para leader Mario Jimenez (AKA "Macaco") has reportedly asserted greater leadership and pressure over the ex-paramilitaries in Itagui's maximum-security prison (reftel A). Gonzalez said Mancuso wants to tell the truth and be

transferred out of Itagui because the pressure from within is becoming unbearable.

¶5. (C) Gonzalez warned, however, that Mancuso could lose his JPL benefits because of possible links to crimes committed after July 25, 2006. Moreover, he also faces criminal charges in Italy. (Note: The JPL states that the law's benefits do not apply to crimes committed after July 25.) An Italian anti-mafia judge has indicted Mancuso for being a main supplier of drugs to Europe, and has requested his extradition. (Note: We have also requested Mancuso's extradition; the GOC approved it but suspended the request due to his participation in the peace process.)

Status on the Other Version Libres Taking Place

¶6. (C) Gonzalez said the ongoing version libres of four mid-level ex-paramilitary leaders are providing a "goldmine of information." He hopes for similar luck with three more confessions set to begin in the coming week. Wilson Salazar (AKA "El Loro"), who was the second-in-command of the Julio Peinado Becerra Front and the first former paramilitary to begin the version libre process on December 14, had not wanted to confess to any crimes until recently when he admitted to participating in four homicides and two kidnappings. The JPL Unit was only aware of one homicide prior to taking his version libre (reftel B). Carlos Mario Montoya (AKA "Arbolito" or "Arnold") from the Pacific Bloc has revealed information about 17 homicides and six mass graves. Meanwhile, in his account of just his first six months of membership in the bloc, Jhon Mario Salazar (AKA "El Pecoso" or "El Gordo") of the Catatumbo Bloc has already revealed his participation in 29 killings.

Justice and Peace Unit Still Needs More Resources

¶7. (C) Gonzalez said he has long been frustrated by lack of resources and support from the Fiscalía and elsewhere. It was only within the last two months that the JPL unit had

received the number of prosecutors and investigators mandated by law (reftel B). Gonzalez said he threatened to resign in early January if he did not get the additional support needed to do his job. In response, Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran authorized additional resources and personnel, but these resources have yet to be received. Even though his budget has quadrupled to more than 10 billion pesos (over USD 4 million) since last year, Gonzalez said it is still insufficient.

18. (C) Iguaran also finally backed Gonzalez's demand that the GOC issue a decree to regulate how other government entities assist victims in the JPL process. Gonzalez said he would meet with Minister of Interior and Justice Carlos Holguin on January 12 to discuss the decree. Thus far, Gonzalez said the JPL unit has assisted 25,000 victims. He clarified that he was misunderstood during an El Tiempo interview on January 7, which quoted him as saying the Fiscalia had 100,000 cases related to JPL. In fact, what he said was 100,000 events or "hechos" have been brought up in the debriefing of the 25,000 victims and the JPL Unit's preliminary investigations.

U.S. Support

19. (C) The U.S. has provided USD 1.5 million in assistance to the JPL Unit, which has included: training and technical assistance for prosecutors, investigators, and judges; office equipment and installations, including the development of the offices and hearing rooms in Bogota, Baranquilla and Medellin; recording and audio/visual systems for version libres; and forensic support, including training of

exhumation teams; and operating expenses. Further assistance plans include: continued technical assistance; development of human identification center for human remains; training and development of additional exhumation teams; enhancement of database; enhancement of recording and documenting systems; security, including armored vehicles. The Embassy has yet, however, to receive authorized FY06 funding for Justice and Peace, as well as FY06 supplemental funds.

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